

2005 Report of Accomplishments (July 1, 2004 to June 30, 2005)

Mason Conservation District



Most Significant Natural Resource Accomplishment

- The Mason Conservation District (MCD) submitted and received a grant to study the feasibility of establishing an anaerobic digester for the treatment of animal manure, fish carcasses, and other organic waste products in the Skokomish Watershed. A subsequent funding source provided money for the design and construction of the infrastructure.



Mission of the Mason Conservation District

- The District desires to make Mason County a better place to live by promoting the wise use and management of all natural resources. We will concentrate on all negative environmental abuse affecting Mason County's air, soil, water, wildlife and recreation. The District will work toward establishing stewardship practices designed to provide food, clean water, timber, fiber, recreation, and open space needs for ourselves and future generations.

Natural Resource Improvements in 2005 – Summary

- Mason Conservation District (MCD) utilizing funding from the Conservation Commission, DOE, SRFB, USF&WS, WDFW and private sources were able to accomplish the following:
- Assist over 50 landowners.
- Provide cost share funds to 14 landowners totaling over \$ 15,000.
- Construct over 5,500 feet of riparian fencing.
- Develop 43 farm and technical assistance plans.
- Respond to Mason County referrals.
- The MCD has become an active participant in monitoring the water quality of the Skokomish Watershed.

Water Quality Implementation

- MCD has been able to accomplish the following with the funding provided through the Commission in the form of the Implementation Grant. Assist 22 landowners with technical assistance, create 6 farm plans and implement BMPs whose total value exceeded \$ 50,000.
- Provide almost \$ 20,000 in cost share assistance.

Basic Funding

- MCD basic funding supports our efforts in maintaining the Kennedy Creek Salmon Trail as an educational venue for both students and the community. Funds are also used to meet our obligation to the WACD in the form of dues and to provide both training and administrative support for District field technicians.

Local Funding

- The MCD was successful in securing a parcel assessment to begin in calendar year 2003. The funds have been collected, however, due to ongoing litigation initiated by 4 landowners the program directed toward technical assistance and referral response has not been instituted and the majority of the funds remain unallocated. The case is before the Washington State Court of Appeals currently.

Puget Sound/Water Quality

- MCD utilizes this grant to support its' GIS mapping efforts. The MCD grant also contains a technical service component. Eleven landowners have received technical assistance with 8 farm plans having been written.

Professional Engineering

- Designed a dike removal project at the mouth of the Skokomish River to restore over 100 acres of intertidal estuary. Project is expected to improve water quality, provide high quality salmon and wildlife habitat, improve near-shore shellfish habitat, and restore natural river geomorphology. This began as a SRFB project sponsored by the Skokomish Tribe and Tacoma Public Utilities, and has been accepted by the Army Corps of Engineers for construction under the Puget Sound and Adjacent Waters program.
- Served as a consultant to Mason County for the Purdy Creek Bridge Replacement for US Highway 101 and the Army Corps of Engineers Watershed Restoration Project for the Skokomish River.
- Designed two SRFB-funded culvert crossings for Mason County Public Works to restore fish passage. Due to the heavy Public Works project workload, this service by Mason Conservation District was key to installing these culverts on an accelerated schedule.
- Worked with the Hood Canal Coordinating Council and Hood Canal Salmon Enhancement Group to secure WDFW Landowner Incentive Program grants for habitat improvement projects and conservation easements on the Skokomish River. Also assisting in a SRFB grant application for a 150 acre conservation easement to protect critical habitat for endangered Puget Sound Chinook.
- Designed three large culverts under the Family Forest Fish Protection Program for the South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group.
- Designed two stream restoration projects for the South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group.
- Assisted NRCS as a technical service provider for numerous EQIP projects.
- Designed numerous small farm BMPs, including waste storage structures and storm water drainage for several property owners.
- Designed several stream bank erosion projects to protect threatened residences. This included one experimental bio-engineered bank armor protection system which has functioned very well.

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

- 21.1 acres planted. 14,000 trees.
- Weed control 10 acres.
- Tree maintenance 9 acres.
- 400' of cross fencing installed.
- 2 new landowner signups.

Livestock/Dairy

- There are no commercial dairies or commercial feed lots in Mason County.

Irrigation Efficiencies

- The MCD is not currently involved in the development of irrigation systems within the county.

Watershed Conservation/Habitat Restoration

- The MCD serves as the Lead Entity for WRIA 14. In that capacity staff of the District has obtained funding for the following projects:
 - Obtained funding from the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) for three projects proposed for the 5th round, totaling \$1,170,300, with sponsor match totaling \$893,300. These projects will open up 1.25 miles of spawning and rearing habitat for salmonids; develop five nearshore projects for implementation; and protect in perpetuity 95-acres of Oakland Bay, including 2000 feet of shoreline and $\frac{3}{4}$ miles of Malaney creek and serve as an education site for Mason County residents.
 - Facilitated the development and submittal of five proposals to the SRFB for the 2005 funding round, with a grant request of \$737,500 and sponsor match of \$286,800. Projects include culvert removals, large woody debris placement and riparian planting, the restoration of seven acres of estuary on Skookum inlet, and a bulkhead removal to be used as a pilot project for all of Puget Sound.
 - Developed habitat recommendations for inclusion within the WRIA 14 Watershed Plan (HB 2514).

- Revised the WRIA 14 Salmon Habitat Recovery Strategy, combining biological needs with community values to identify and prioritize habitat projects for WRIA 14.
- Partnered with SRFB and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to offer Community Salmon Fund grants for small salmon habitat projects totaling less than \$100,000. This program received five proposals, totaling \$150,000 in grant requests for landowners and their projects.
- Worked with SRFB, Department of Natural Resources and project sponsor to sponsor and implement salmon habitat projects on small forest landowner land through the Family Forest Fish Passage Program (FFFPP). These projects to date have opened up three miles of stream habitat for fish.

Small Farm Programs

- Creation of a “Small Farms Program” within Mason County. Employment of a staff member who develops programs which promote the sustainability of small farm and livestock operations within the county.
- The agrarian community of Mason County is comprised almost entirely of small non-commercial farms, thus the accomplishments reported under the preceding categories almost without exception involve the Districts’ successes and involvement with what would be considered “small farm programs”.

Community Collaboration & Coordination

- The establishment of a partnership with WSU Mason County Extension which led to the creation of a Small Farms Extension Educator position. This staff member is supported and shared equally by both entities.
- The MCD works in close collaboration with the following groups: Mason County, Mason County public schools, Green Diamond Resource Company, Shelton Rotary, UW Sea Grant, HCSEG, SPSSEG, Squaxin Island Tribe, Skokomish Indian Tribe, WSU, Hood Canal Dissolved Oxygen Committee, Hood Canal Watershed Education Network, Capital Land Trust, and the Chehalis Basin Education Consortium

Marketing/Outreach & Education

- The MCD sponsored or participated in 25 educational activities this year. By actual count over 10,000 residents were affected through these events. Included among them were the following: Kids With Conservation Knowledge (KWICK), Mason County Fair, Oysterfest, Forest Festival Field Day, Chehalis Student Congress, Environmental Explorations, 4-H Super Saturday Pasture Workshop, Celebrate Mason county Agriculture, South Sound Green Conference, Thurston CD Envirothon, Kennedy Creek Salmon Trail, Pioneer Outdoor School, Hood Canal Youth Summit and field activities with Choice and Shelton High Schools.

Washington Conservation Districts assisting land managers with their conservation choices

